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Clinton-Care and Kennedy-Care: Deja Vu All Over Again

Same Supporters, Same Goals, Same Principles

The same people who offered America nationalized medicine in 1994 under the guise of "health care reform" are now offering America the same principles of government-mandated, government-regulated, and government-prescribed health care — the only difference is this time they're offering it under the guise of "managed care reform." The same people with the same principles pursuing the same goal: No wonder the two are so similar.

The Same Senators

Because the American people had resoundingly voiced their disapproval of President Clinton's plan to nationalize America's health care system, then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell never forced his party to vote on the plan. However, one roll call vote in the Senate can be viewed as revealing the Senators' predisposition to the principle of a nationalized health care system. The vote was on August 10, 1994, a Sense of the Senate amendment offered by Senator Jesse Helms to the Defense Appropriations bill. The Helms amendment actually placed the bar very low by stating:

"Major health care reform is too important to enact in a rushed fashion, and Congress should take whatever time is necessary to do it right by deferring action until next year to give Congress and the American people time to obtain, read, and consider all alternatives and make wise choices, unless the Senate has had the full opportunity to debate and amend the proposal after the Congressional Budget Office estimates have been made available."

The vote was on the motion to table: 54 senators favored tabling the Helms amendment and 46 opposed. All 44 Republicans and two Democrats (Senators Campbell and Shelby — both now Republicans) supported the amendment; all 54 remaining Democrats supported the Clinton health care plan (that is, they refused to vote to agree even to take a wait-and-see attitude of first subjecting the package to budgetary scrutiny and debate).

- All 29 current cosponsors to this year's Kennedy-Care bill are Democrats and 28 were in Congress in 1994.

- Of those 28, 22 opposed the Helms amendment and thus supported the Clinton-Care plan.
- Of the remaining 6 in Congress (Senator Cleland was not in Congress), Senator Durbin (then a House member) cosponsored the Clinton-Care plan (HR 3600) and then Representatives Boxer and Torricelli spoke in favor of the plan on the House floor. [Note: no up-or-down votes took place on the House floor on Clinton-Care, either.]
- Of the 28 Senators who are cosponsoring Kennedy-Care and were in Congress in 1994, 25 supported Clinton-Care in some form [that is, 22 voting against Helms amendment, plus Durbin, Boxer and Torricelli].

The Same Goal

By their own admission, the goal of a nationalized health care system run by federal bureaucrats was never abandoned by those who sought it through Clinton-Care.

- ▶ *"All the other advanced countries can figure out how to get health insurance to everybody...If what I tried to do before won't work, maybe we can do it another way. That's what we've tried to do, a step at a time until eventually we finish this."* [President Clinton before the Service Employees International Union, 9/15/97]
- ▶ *"We're going to get this done and we're going to keep coming back at it . . . If we have a big sweep for the Democrats in the House and Senate, we'll get single-payer."* [Senator Kennedy, *Reuters*, 6/17/96]
- ▶ *"In a little-noticed aside to reporters during a recent tour of Eastern Europe, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said she still regards the government overhaul of the \$1 trillion medical industry that she drafted in 1994 as a 'basic model' for the future." Mrs. Clinton's spokesman Neel Lattimore: "That was the hope in 1994 and that is the hope today."* [*Washington Times*, 7/22/96]
- ▶ *"Certainly his views haven't changed ... President Clinton remains committed to the idea. Indeed, the President will try again if a more receptive Congress is ever elected, Magaziner said."* [*Providence Journal*, 5/7/96, on remarks by White House adviser Ira Magaziner, designer of the Clinton-Kennedy nationalized health care plan]

The Same Result

When you get the same people pursuing the same goal, it is no wonder you get the same result: Excessive federal mandates, excessive federal regulations, and so the extra federal bureaucrats — all crowding into the examining room with patients and their doctors. In fact, the only marked difference between the 1994 Clinton-Care effort and the 1998 Kennedy-Care one has been that this year's throws trial lawyers into the mix. The results are predictable:

- According to the Barents Group of KPMG Peat Marwick, health insurance premiums could increase between 2.7 and 8.6 percent due to Kennedy-Care's increased litigation provisions (including employer liability) alone.
 - According to their analysis, this would translate into as many as 1.8 million more Americans without coverage in 1999.
 - For those who don't lose their coverage, the additional employer cost amounts to \$1,284 per worker, and subsequent lost pay to workers would be \$1,512 over the next five years. Other provisions of Kennedy-Care would mean increases as well.
- Kennedy-Care, S. 1890, uses some variation of the word "require" a whopping 108 times!
- According to a June 1998 analysis by Multinational Business Services (a respected regulatory consulting firm made of former OMB officials), Kennedy-Care would:
 - place 196 new mandates on private healthcare insurance companies;
 - institute at least 56 new instances for federal lawsuits;
 - put in place at least 59 new federal regulations;
 - require 3,828 new federal workers to administer its programs; and
 - cost \$776.5 million in new federal spending over the next five years.

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